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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [MOPS](#) [UK](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: HELMAND UPDATE: FOOD ZONE ALLEGATIONS ARE BUILDING
AGAINST GOVERNOR MANGAL

REF: A. (A) KABUL 973
 B. (B) KABUL 910
 C. (C) KABUL 2940
 D. (D) KABUL 3286

Classified By: Interagency Provincial Affairs Coordinator Scott Kilner
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Begin Summary. Governor Mangal is working steadily to expand an effective GIROA presence to the district level and continues to prove himself a pragmatic and energetic governor in Helmand. However, the continued drumbeat relating to abuses involving his signature Food Zone program have not quelled local discontent with the program and his leadership of the effort. Investigations of the program are on-going and Governor Mangal has laid the blame directly on the Deputy Governor for any corrupt practices. Mangal has made no secret of his desire to leave Helmand soon after the elections to secure a position in Kabul. Associated reporting supports the notion that Mangal has gained favor with President Karzai for his efforts in the east and is well positioned for a post-election appointment. End Summary.

Governor Mangal Focused on Expanding GIROA's Presence

2. (SBU) Governor Mangal has been active across Helmand Province during the past two weeks, conducting counternarcotics shuras in Kanashin, Sangin, Garmsir and Nad Ali districts; hosting the District Development Working Group (DDWG)'s visit to Lashkar Gah and Nawa; and meeting with Senator Kerry at a shura in Garmsir. While the visiting DDWG delegation from Kabul was well received, several of the local elders pushed back hard on Mangal and were very critical of his administration, especially implementation of the Food Zone program. Many said they had not been involved in the creation of the wheat seed beneficiary lists and they questioned the quality of the seed and fertilizer that was going to be distributed. This lack of local consultation has fueled rumors that the Governor's staff bought inferior seed and fertilizer for the program and the distribution process would benefit locals with ties to the governor's office.

3. (C) Despite his seemingly limitless energy, Governor Mangal appears to be planning his exit from Helmand and has told the U.S. PRT officer on several occasions that he wants to leave Helmand as soon as the election results are announced. Last week the PRT learned from sources in the Karzai administration that Mangal is in line for a job at the Ministry of Mines. Governor Mangal told the PRT that he is currently in better standing with Kabul than just a few weeks ago. This report matches UK reporting that Karzai was pleased with the support he received from Mangal in the east and a good job would be waiting for him in Kabul. All signs indicate that Mangal has cut a deal with Karzai for a soft

landing in Kabul and is ready to leave Helmand.

Food Zone

14. (C) As a result of PRT inquiries and discussions with local officials and residents, the PRT believes that several key members of the Mangal team took UK funds for the Food Zone program, bought substitute low quality wheat seed and fertilizer, and pocketed the difference. (NOTE: These specific allegations relate to the wheat seed distribution program funded by the UK. END NOTE) Additionally, there are significant concerns that the distribution lists for the farmers who are supposed to receive the seed and fertilizer have been rigged to favor those with connections to members of Mangal's staff. Governor Mangal has initiated an investigation of these allegations through the National Directorate of Security (NDS) and staged several arrests of agricultural staff. However, he seems increasingly nervous about the growing problems with this program and has now adopted the generic line that he and his staff had nothing to do with the organization of the program. The PRT leadership continues to engage Mangal about these charges and Mangal himself said that he suspected several of his staffs' actions may have been "inappropriate."

Deputy Governor Satar

15. (C) Deputy Governor Satar remains in Helmand but he too is seeking a move to Kabul as soon as possible. He continues to be viewed with deep suspicion by the local Helmand leadership

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relating to his role in the wheat seed distribution programs, which are part of the larger Food Zone program. Satar is alleged to have worked with other members of Mangal's team to supply low quality wheat seed and fertilizer for the program and pocketed the difference in cost for the higher quality wheat. Staff from the Helmand Line Departments from Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the Ministry of Counternarcotics (MCN) told PRT officers that Satar and members from the Governor's staff took money to seal the transportation contract for the wheat and fertilizer distribution. Many Helmandis believe Mangal is prepared to sacrifice Satar, and other staff, to save his reputation as a non-corrupt Governor should investigations gain steam.

Comment

16. (C) Governor Mangal is surely nervous about the possible blot on his reputation as a non-corrupt and effective governor. His close relationship to the various PRT member nations and its coalition forces has manifested itself in successful shuras and the rapid demonstration of GIROA presence following military clearing operations. At the same time, the growing perception in the Province that his signature Food Zone program and wheat distribution programs have been used for personal gain by those around him are taking their toll. While there is no evidence at this time of his direct involvement in the corruption, it would be surprising if this type of corruption occurred without Mangal's knowledge, or perhaps even his complicity. Mangal's efforts to leave Helmand on a high note immediately following the election is likely a combination of his readiness to take on a new position after successful partnership with coalition partners and steady progress in the province, but also well timed to depart Helmand before others try to use the Food Zone program discrepancies to undermine his leadership in the Province.

17. (SBU) This cable is based on reporting by the PRT in Helmand.

EIKENBERRY